

Appl. No. 09/714,743
Reply to Office Action of June 27, 2005

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action dated June 27, 2005. In the Office Action, claims 1 and 7-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and claims 2-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103. In response claims 1 and 9-11 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced by way of any of the amendments or additions thereof. Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections should be withdrawn for at least the reasons set forth below.

In the Office Action, claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 or § 103 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,926,179 ("Matsuda"). More specifically, claims 1 and 7-11 are rejected as allegedly anticipated by Matsuda, and claims 2-6 are rejected as allegedly obvious in view of Matsuda. Applicants believe that the anticipation and obviousness rejections are improper for at least those reasons as discussed below.

With respect to the anticipation rejection, claims 1, 9, 10 and 11 are the sole independent claims. Claim 1 recites a virtual space system having a chat function, including: a virtual space control device including transmission holding means for holding latest position information of a transmitter in a virtual space and transmission region definition information for defining a transmission region as a closed region at a side of the transmitter, and reception object holding means for holding latest position information of a reception object and reception region definition information for defining a reception region as a closed region at a side of the reception object; and at least one chat storage file for storing only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter in the reception region or only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter when the reception object enters the transmission region, wherein a reception region use flag information is used to determine whether the reception region is used.

Claim 9 recites a virtual space control device for controlling a virtual space having a chat function, including: transmission object holding means for holding latest position information of a transmitter in the virtual space and transmission region definition information for defining a transmission region as a closed region at a side of the transmitter; and reception object holding means for holding latest position information of a reception object and reception region definition information for defining a reception region as a closed region at a side of the reception object, wherein only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter in the reception region or only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter when the reception object enters the transmission

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region are stored in at least one chat storage file, and wherein a reception region use flag information is used to determine whether the reception region is used..

Claim 10 recites a control method of a virtual space having a chat function, including the steps of: holding latest position information of a transmitter in the virtual space and transmission region definition information for defining a transmission region as closed region at a side of the transmitter; holding latest position information of a reception object and reception region definition information for defining a reception region as a closed region at a side of the reception object; and storing in at least one chat storage file only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter in the reception region or only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter when the reception object enters the transmission region, wherein a reception region use flag information is used to determine whether the reception region is used.

Claim 11 recites an information providing medium for providing a program which causes a computer to execute functions of: holding latest position information of a transmitter in a virtual space and transmission region definition information for defining a transmission region as a closed region at a side of the transmitter; holding latest position information of a reception object and reception region definition for defining a reception region as a closed region at a side of the reception object; and storing in at least one chat storage file only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter in the reception region or only contents of a chat issued from the transmitter when the reception object enters the transmission region, wherein a reception region use flag information is used to determine whether the reception region is used.

As previously discussed, independent claims 1 and 9-11 have been amended. As amended, these claims further recite, in part, a reception region use flag information is used to determine whether the reception region is used. The amendments as discussed above are supported in the specification, for example, on page 12.

In contrast, Applicants believe that Matsuda is distinguishable from the claimed invention. For example, Matsuda fails to disclose or suggest the reception region use flag information of independent claims 1 and 9-11. In Matsuda, a user determines whether or not an object is available for chat by use of a pointer that is displayed on a three-dimensional virtual reality space image. When the pointer is placed onto any of objects displayed in the three-dimensional virtual reality space image to specify the pointed object, it is determined whether

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that object is chat-enabled based on the attribute information thereof. If the object is found chat-enabled, the pointer having a normal shape of an arrow is changed to a pointer having a shape resembling a human face. See, Matsuda, Abstract. Clearly, this fails to disclose or suggest the reception region use flag information as claimed and as further supported in the Specification on page 12, beginning at line 4 to page 13, at line 23.

Accordingly, the reception region use flag information in the presently pending application is patentable distinguishable from the user pointer in Matsuda.

With respect to the obviousness rejection of claims 2-6, these claims each depend from independent claim 1. For substantially the same reasons as discussed above, Applicants believe that Matsuda is distinguishable from the claimed invention as defined by claims 2-6.

Based on at least these reasons, Applicants believe that Matsuda fails to disclose or suggest the claimed invention. Therefore, Applicants believe that Matsuda fails to anticipate or render obvious the claimed invention.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the anticipation and obviousness rejections be withdrawn.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance and earnestly solicit reconsideration of same.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: July 28, 2005

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